



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary and lower secondary
(ages 10–14; years 5 to 9)

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KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** English
- **General capabilities:** Personal and social capability; Intercultural Understanding; Ethical Behaviour and Understanding; Literacy; Critical and Creative Thinking; Information and communication technology capability
- **Cross-curriculum priorities:** Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia;

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- To discuss technology and its uses
- To respond to a text and share feelings and thoughts about the events and people in text
- To discuss social and economic inequity
- To discuss storytelling; what makes a story extraordinary
- To discuss resilience, perseverance and the power of human connection

THEMES

- Family
- Technology
- Hope
- Survival

PREPARED BY

Penguin Random House Australia

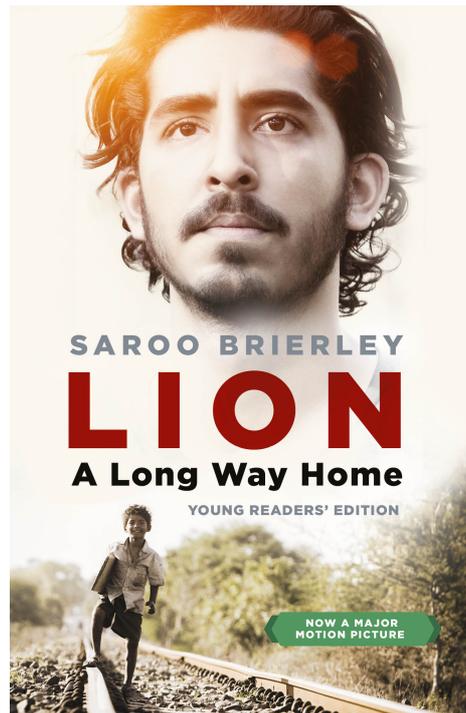
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Lion: A Long Way Home young readers' edition Saroo Brierley

PLOT SUMMARY

Can you imagine being lost and not finding your way home again?

Saroo Brierley became lost on a train in India at the age of five. Not knowing the name of his family or where he was from, he survived for weeks on the streets of Kolkata, before being taken into an orphanage and adopted by a family in Australia.

Despite being happy in his new home, Saroo always wondered about his origins. He spent hours staring at the map of India on his bedroom wall. He pored over satellite images on Google Earth seeking out landmarks he recognised. And one day, after years of searching, he miraculously found what he was looking for.

Then he set off on a journey back to India to see if he could find his mother.

This inspirational true story of survival and triumph against incredible odds is now a major motion picture starring Dev Patel, David Wenham and Nicole Kidman.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Saroo Brierley was born in an Indian town called Khandwa. In 1986, aged only five, he lost all contact with his family when he was at a train station waiting for his brother who never returned.

After living on the streets of Calcutta for three weeks by himself, he was placed into a local orphanage from which an Australian family adopted Saroo. He then grew up with his newly adopted parents in Hobart, Tasmania where he spent the next twenty-five years.

After years trying to track down his old town through the labyrinth of railways lines on Google Earth and an image etched into his brain as a five year old, he finally found his town Khandwa on the map and travelled to India to try and find members of his family. In early 2012, after twenty-five years of separation, he finally reunited with his mother.

<http://sarobrierley.com/>

AUTHOR'S INSPIRATION

Saroo says:

Imagine being totally lost as a tiny child. It amazes me now when I think about how I managed to survive and then thrive. When I was on the streets, so hungry and alone, I wondered what would happen to me. Would I be okay? I was by myself every day, even though I was among thousands of people. I truly had to trust and rely on my instincts. When I was taken to Liluah Home it was almost a relief because I didn't have to face the fear of the unknown. When I was given the option of accepting a new family, I had real hope for my future – I thought that maybe I would be loved and cared for again. The idea that complete strangers would want to look after me as their own son was a concept I could hardly believe. I am so glad I accepted the opportunity to become part of a family again, and to begin my new life.

I wrote this book to show how powerful you can be if you put your mind to it and use every resource and opportunity available. I went from a child without the benefit of education to a strong and healthy guy who wrote a book – WOW! I hope that my story will bring enlightenment to you on many levels.

I am truly thankful to my first mother who gave me the survival skills that saved my life on the streets of Kolkata and also to my new parents for giving me a new life in Tasmania.

We are all enjoying the excitement of making a film and sharing our story around the world.

Life is good.

Questions

1. Can you think of a time when you followed your instincts?
2. Can you think of a time when you avoided danger?

Activities

1. Imagine if you were lost and couldn't find your family. What would you do?
2. Watch the film trailer for *Lion*:

<http://lionmovie.com/>

Talk about the differences between telling a story in film and in book form. How are they similar? How are they different?

WRITING STYLE

This book unfolds chronologically, told from Saroo's own point of view in the first person as he tells the extraordinary story of his life.

Questions

1. How would you describe the writing style of *Lion*?
2. Consider the story's structure, how and when information is revealed, and the author's voice. How effectively do these elements contribute to the novel's storytelling?
3. How does the first-person point-of-view affect what is revealed to the reader and how they experience the story?
4. How might the story be different if it had been written from another character's point-of-view? Choose an incident in the story and write it from a different character's perspective.
5. How does the book's title relate to its content? What does it refer to?





TEACHERS' RESOURCES

QUESTIONS

1. What situation does Saroo find himself in as the story of *Lion* begins? How does it change throughout the book?
2. Describe the physical environment and conditions of his home in Tasmania
3. Describe the physical environment and conditions of his home in India.
4. Use examples drawn from Saroo's memories to build a picture of his 'previous life' – what were his experiences of home, parents and family life before he was separated from them?
5. Describe the environment and conditions at the orphanage in Calcutta (Kolkata).
6. Choose one of these emotions and find text in the book that you think reflects it strongly: Hate, Fear, Grief, Love, Relief, Joy.
7. Develop a list of Saroo's strengths as you find out more about him.
8. How does he react when he is separated from his Indian family and becomes lost? How does he react to the dangers he is confronted by? What positive attributes enable him to cope – emotionally and mentally?
9. Create a pitch for a film based on Saroo's story. Who would you cast to play the different characters? Look at the choice of cast in the film that has been made. Are they how you imagined the characters as you were reading the story? How are they different? How are they well chosen?

ACTIVITIES

- Select text from different points in *Lion* and discuss these in class.
- Write about how you would feel at this point in the story if you had experienced everything that Saroo had experienced up to that point.
- Can you write down your thoughts and feelings about *Lion*? Explain what struck you the most about Saroo? How do you feel at the end of his story?
- Think about the different experiences of children in different countries around the world. How is life different for other children? How is life the same? How was life different for Saroo in India? How was it the same?
- Look at a Google Earth map of your home and your school. Can you recognise familiar buildings and spaces? Try looking for a place nearby, guided only by your knowledge of the buildings, parks and roads in the area.
- Look up a Google Earth map of Saroo's hometown Khandwa. Can you recognise the landmarks he mentions in the book?
- Watch this video Saroo has made with Google:

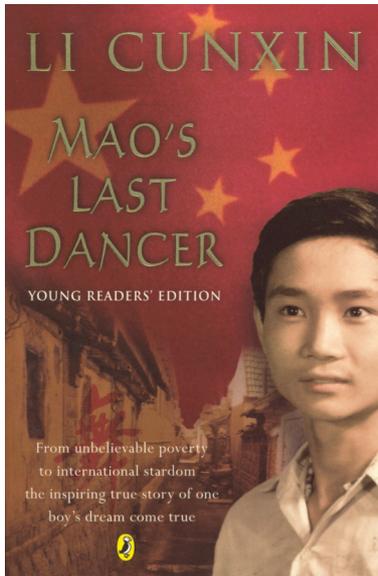
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXEvZ8B04bE>

Why do you think they have chosen him to talk about his story. What makes his an 'incredible true story of hope, determination and technology'?



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

FURTHER READING FROM PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE AUSTRALIA

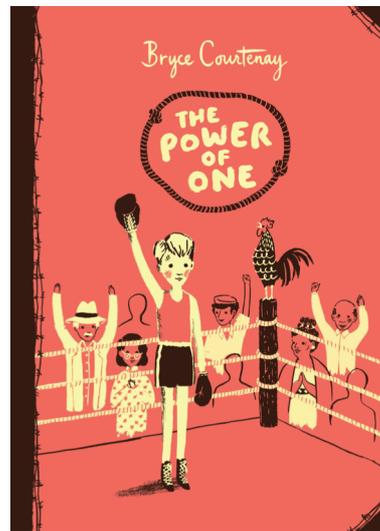


Mao's Last Dancer young readers' edition
by Li Cunxin

Why this story? Read it as another example of determination and following your dream.

One day, not so very many years ago, a small peasant boy was chosen to study ballet at the Beijing Dance Academy. His mother urged him to take this chance of a lifetime.

But Li was only eleven years old and he was scared and lonely, pushed away from all that he had ever known and loved. He hated the strict training routines and the strange place he had been brought to. All he wanted to do was go home – to his mother, father and six brothers, to his own small village. But soon Li realised that his mother was right. He had the chance to do something special with his life – and he never turned back . . .



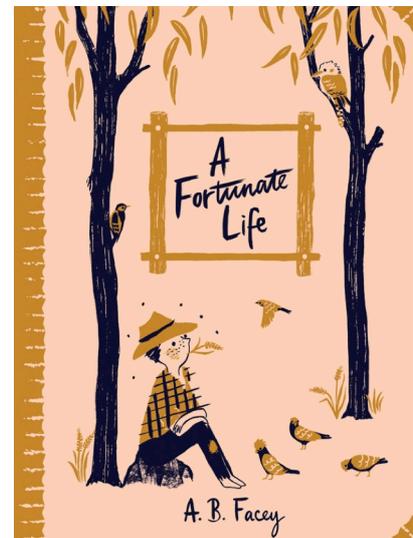
The Power of One (young readers' edition)
by Bryce Courtenay

Why this story? Read it as another example of resilience, determination and the quest to be true to yourself.

This is Bryce Courtenay's classic best-selling story of the triumph of the human spirit, specially adapted for young readers.

Born in a South Africa divided by racism and hatred, little six-year-old Peekay learns that small can beat big. Armed with this knowledge, he resolves to take on the injustices of his country, and sets his heart on becoming the welterweight champion of the world.

Peekay starts to take boxing lessons, makes new friends, collects cacti and plays the piano. Above all, he learns to think with his head and then with his heart. He discovers that nothing can defeat the determination to be true to yourself: that this is the power of one.



A Fortunate Life (young readers' edition)
by Albert Facey

Why this story? Read it as another example of resilience and an extraordinary Australian journey and life.

And that's the way it was. I would often go into the bush and watch the birds and think in some ways they were like me – they had to fend for themselves as soon as the mother bird thought that they were old enough.

A true classic of Australian literature, this simply written autobiography is an inspiration. *A Fortunate Life* is the story of a life lived to the full – the extraordinary journey of an ordinary young man.

ORDER FORM

TITLE	AUTHOR	ISBN	SCHOOL YEAR	RRP	QTY	TOTAL
Lion: A Long Way Home young readers' edition	Saroo Brierley	97801437847 60	5+	\$16.99		
Mao's Last Dancer young readers' edition	Li Cunxin	97801433016 46	5+	\$19.99		
A Fortunate Life (young readers' edition)	Albert Facey	97806700768 95	5+	\$19.99		
The Power of One (young readers' edition)	Bryce Courtenay	97806700775 64	5+	\$19.99		
TOTAL						

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